An inaugural dissertation

on

Pneumonia biliosa

by

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Pneumonia biliosa

This disease comes on, with langoor, and debility, which are soon succeeded, by chills, flying pains all over the body; bilious vomiting, and purging, and sometimes diarrhoea and colic; which are followed in a short time by quick breathing, considerable thirst, head ache, and other feverish symptoms. In a few hours the respiration, becomes more difficult and laborious; the patient being seized with pain in the side, extending towards the clavicle, and shoulder, and downwards along the cartilages of the false ribs; sometimes darting from the sternum, towards the dorsal vertebra; attended at this time, with great difficulty, in making a full inspiration, and with considerable pain in coughing.

These are the symptoms which for the most part appear, but the patient will sometimes complain of heaviness, and oppression in the breast, probably depending upon that state of the lungs, which the French express by the word engorgement, and which we meet with in peripneumonia notha: sometimes palpitation of the heart, preternatural heat, or cold, are accompanying symptoms.

Cleghorn in treating of this disease, as it appeared in Minorca, observes that it was not uncommon for the pains to move about in the thorax from one side, to the other, sometimes they would shift from from the breast, to the limbs, and suddenly return to the bowels; in some rare instances, after leaving one side, they unexpectedly attacked the other, and thus proved fatal in a short time. the left side of the thorax was not so liable to be affected as the other: probably the effect, says Dr Rush of

the combination of bilious fever, which disposed to hepatic pains, and obstructions.

Whichsoever side was affected, the sick lay easiest on the opposite: though the generality were obliged to lie upon their backs, or to sit up in bed, with their head erect. The external heat was in some cases less than natural, but for the most part it was very severe; the pulse was variable not only in different persons; but in the same person, at different times. there was a difference in respect to strength in different arms. that of the pained side being most obscure. a natural pulse indicated great danger. Nor was the colour or consistence of the blood, to be trusted, in many it had a white, or pale yellow colour. the serum being of the same complexion. but for the most part, it was red or florid. It frequently changed its appearance in a few hours. Dr Rush observes that from the stales of skin, the pulse, and

the blood, that this disease partook a good deal of a malignant nature. The changes in the appearances of the blood, drawn at different times, shew how much they are influenced by the varying state, and force of the blood vessels.

The patient being able to sleep sound in a natural posture, and to make a full inspiration with ease while his thirst, and inward heat are moderate, are favourable symptoms. In this, as in most febrile diseases, there is some remission in the morning; and about the third, or fourth day, Dr Cleghorn observed a considerable remission, and was sometimes a total cessation of every violent symptom; but this was remarked by him, to be a treacherous remission; for on the fourth or fifth, a delirium suddenly came on, or the breathing became more difficult than ever, and one, or both of those symptoms increasing hourly, the patient expired in a day or two, either

suffocated or raving mad.

When sufficient evacuations have not been made in the early stage of the complaint; nature sometimes relieves herself by some exertion, as a copious sweat, a considerable expectoration, or a discharge of bile; and thus the life of the patient, may be saved.

Dissections exhibit every appearance which we meet with in violent inflammation of the lungs, and in bilious fever;; as abscesses in the substance of the lungs, and liver, adhesions, suppuration, gangrene, and a membrane, the effect of inflammation.

In the pneumonia biliosa or bilious pleurisy of authors:: the system labours under two distinct, and violent morbid actions; the one in the liver and stomach, the other in the lungs.

This disease appears after the season of the year, when the bilious or the yellow fever prevails, it often attacks those, who have been debilitated by either

of the above mentioned fevers, hence it occurs after autumnal epidemics. Those persons who have escaped the bilious fever in the fall, if they have been exposed to its remote cause; are generally affected with the pneumonica bilosa in the winter, and spring.

It is influenced in its violence by the change of the atmosphere, and Dr Sydenham when treating of it, observes; "that whoever in the cure of diseases, has not always in view the constitution of the atmosphere, in as much as it tends to produce some particular epidemic, and likewise to reduce all the cotemporary diseases, to its form, and likenes, proceeds in an uncertain and fallacious manner."

This remark of his will apply very well to the complaint; and from what has been said of its dependance upon the same remote cause producing the bilious, and yellow fever; it must be evident that any of the exciting causes of fever

as very sudden changes in the weather, cold applied to the body, when heated, violent exercise, too long and loud speaking, &c may throw the system into unhealthy and irregular action, and thus produce the disease.

As we meet with the Synochus fortis, Synocha, typhoid, and the typhus pulse, our remedies must be varied or suited to the varying and opposite states of the system.

Where the pulse is Synocha or Synochus fortis attended with symptoms indicating great inflammation, Bloodletting should be carried to a very great extent it should be repeated as often as occasion may require, and if possible, the blood should be drawn off early in the disease.

Dr Blagdon after having well acquainted with its dangerous tendency, and the formidable and even fatal symptoms, which in almost every

case occurred, and that too; in a very short time, unless sufficient evacuations were made, was in the habit of taking from thirty, to forty ounces, of blood from the patient, in the first twenty four hours of his attendance, provided he was called in time. Altho; very great dependance in cert ain states of the system, is to be placed on the lancet, still our practice would be uncertain were we to rely solely on it.

Purges from the great secretion, and excretion of bile, are of essential service; they should be of Calomel alone, in the dose of twenty or thirty gr ains to an adult, or they should be Calomel, combined with Jalap, rhubarb, or the may apple of our country. It is sometimes necessary to give them every day, or every other day, and here as in other violent diseases they will operate more effectually after bloodletting

Blisters may likewise be applied, they should as Dr Cullen observes in all pulmonic affections be large, it will be improper to use them untill sufficient evacuations have been made, unless indeed, in some cases, when they may be applied in the very first stage.

Emetics have been highly recommended and they certainly are entitled to our attention; but should never be used, when there is great morbid action and this must be reduced by the above aperitive remedies previous to their employment. In support of what has been said of the efficacy of emetics, I have been informed by Dr Henry Jackson of Savanah, that the negroes, who work in the low marshy grounds near that town, and who are often affected with the bilious pleurisy in the winter and spring, never require more than one small bleeding, after premising this, an

emetic of the tartris antimonii, appears to act like a charm, removing all the troublesome symptoms and curing the patient in a very short time.

A circumstance worthy of notice is, that they are seldom affected with the fevers which prevail in the autumn, and which prove so fatal to the whites, but immediately upon the approach of cold weather, and during its continuance, they are subject to the pneumonia biliosa, and are cured as above mentioned.

In that form of the disease in which the patient is affected with languor, considerable debility, and a disposition to faint upon being moved, and in which the pulse in typhoid, and typhus, our remedies must be the reverse, of what is found so essentially necessary, in the opposite state of the system, above mentioned. Instead of the Lancet, the various stimulants as

the Volat: alk: opium, the Virginia snake root, and Camphor must be used.

Before giving any one, or all of these it will be proper to administer an Emetic; from what I have seen of the good effects of Camphor alone, and when Combined with Calomel, in bilious fever attended with debility, I have no doubt but that it will be found a valuable remedy and this opinion of its probable efficacy is strengthened from having used it myself in certain stages of pneumonia vera with advantage. Blisters may be applied if the pain is Considerable.

In every stage of the complaint, if the cough, and difficulty in expectorating, should prove troublesome, demulcents may be given - and opiates may likewise be employed for the same purpose - Ionics as the peruvian bark

once columbo, have been given, once where the debility is great, or where with this, the disease puts on the form of an intermittent they certainly may be used with advantage to the patient,